

How to teach those who reject the Bible as inspired

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Introduction: We will increasingly meet people who regard the Bible as a book of man.

- A. The “mainline” denominational preachers have long since rejected The Bible as inspired.

“The results of a poll taken in 1967 among 7,441 Protestant preachers in the U.S. In this poll 89% of Episcopal priests, 82% of Methodist preachers, 81% of Presbyterian preachers and 57% of American Lutheran preachers rejected a literal interpretation of the Bible when asked if they believed the Bible is the inspired word of God.” In 1981 here are the results: 95% of Episcopalians, 87% of Methodists, 82% of Presbyterians, 77% of American Lutherans, and 67% of American Baptists said “No.”

1. In Nebraska a local Methodist preacher proudly published a book to this end.
2. In Bessemer I had a discussion with a Disciples of Christ preacher.
3. My experience as a student at Samford University.

- B. We are seeing a flood of immigrants from Europe and China as well as the Middle East.

1. How do you approach an atheist? or a Moslem? or a Hindu believer?
2. You cannot just quote the Bible to prove the Bible and be effective with many.

- C. My goal is to bring them to a belief in the God who gave the Bible.

1. In turn one will come to accept the written word. (**2 Tim 3:16-17**)
2. The writers of the Bible give testimony to their credibility. (**2 Pt 1:16-21**)

- D. If possible give the gospel message to an atheist!

1. Some are atheists because of the will and not because of the mind.
2. There are those who need something else first.

I. Ask the student to first view the Bible as a document of history

- A. It is easily established that the Bible is a collection of writings over a 1,500 year history. In the New Testament the majority of those writings were letters.

1. Examine the Bible first as history!
2. Some common obstacles that can be turned into opportunity:
 - a. “The Bible is a collection of myths.”
 - b. “The Bible is full of contradictions.”
 - c. “People who believe in the Bible do so because of emotion and not evidence.”

- B. Consider the historical detail and accuracy of the New Testament. (**Lk 3:1-3**)

1. If Luke and others made these things up then many errors would be found!
2. Sir William Ramsey and others who test the evidence know these were honest, careful men.

II. Show the historical claims of these writers to the student

- A. Point out the real nature of a Biblical faith.

1. Faith is based upon evidence. (**Heb 11:1; 1 Pet 3:15; John 8:32**)
2. Those who say faith is a "blind leap in the dark" are wrong.
3. Challenge the student to test the evidence! (Ex. Richard.)

- B. At the heart of every sermon of the apostles is their eyewitness testimony of the raised Christ. (**Acts 2:32; 3:14-15; 5:30-32; 10:39-43; 13:27-31**)

1. Is this testimony believable?

2. Many will lie or simply are mistaken when they bear testimony.
 3. On what basis do we *reject* some testimony and *accept* other testimony?
- C. Are these writers credible?
1. Were the apostles in a position to know the facts? (**1 John 1:1-3**)
 2. Did the apostles have any advantages in lying about the resurrection?
(1 Cor 15:30-32; John 16:1-3)
 3. Are the writings of the apostles historically accurate?
 4. Was there agreement between the numerous witnesses? (**1 Cor 15:1-6**)

III. Engage the student in testing the presented evidence

- A. Explain and examine significant facts.
1. **Jesus was Dead** - Hear the description of an eyewitness. (**John 19:32-36**)
 2. **The body was placed in a new tomb.** (**Matt 27:60**)
 3. **The tomb was cut out of rock.** (**Matt 27:60**)
 4. **A large stone covered the entrance.** (**Matt 27:60**)
 5. **A Roman seal was placed on the stone.** (**Matt 27:66**)
 6. **A Roman Guard was placed at the tomb.** (**Matt 27:65-66**)
 7. **The tomb was inspected carefully.** (**John 20:3-8; John 20:11**)
- B. There is a great question to be answered: **Who Moved the Stone?**
1. Did the **Jews?** (**Matt 27:62-66**)
 - a. The Jews were the very ones trying to prevent the resurrection.
 - b. If so they had a perfect time to present the body 50 days later!
(Acts 2:32, 36)
 2. Did the **Romans?**
 - a. The Romans would not want to risk their necks for what they would consider as "silly Jewish superstition".
 - b. The penalty for a Roman guard's failure was death.
(Acts 16:26-27;27:42)
 3. Did the **Disciples?**
 - a. This was the best explanation the smartest men among the Jews could come up with. (**Mat 28:11-15**)
 - b. If they were asleep, how did they know it was the disciples?
 - c. Why did they not arrest the apostles as grave robbers?
 - d. Did the apostles give their lives for a lie?
 - e. Their account is believable (**Mark 16:9-14**)
 4. Who then moved the stone? (**Acts 13:27-31**) (NKJV)

IV. Present to the student the power of fulfilled prophecy

- A. The words of Christ are recorded. (**Psa 22:1**)
- B. The words and actions of His enemies are recorded. (**Psa 22:6-8, 18**)
- C. The details of crucifixion are recorded. (**Psa 22:14-17**)
- D. How can these things be written over a 1000 years before the event and even before crucifixion was even invented?

Conclusion: Even though this evidence is powerful, it must be received in order to have power in us. (**2 Thess 1:9-10; 1 Thess 2:13**)